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Sociology – Slovakia[1]

Discussant: Eva Laiferová

1. Analysis of the pre-1989 situation

The beginnings of sociological thinking in Slovakia were tied to the institutionalization of sociology in the Czech lands. The Slovak graduates[1] of Prague and Vienna Universities had freely grouped around the journal *HLAS* (1898-1904). Inspired by the sociologist and politician Tomáš G. Masaryk, they critically analyzed the political and economic situation in the Habsburg monarchy. As a side effect, they advanced sociology as the modern science about society (Klobucký, 2001).

One special figure was Jan Lajčiak, a pastor and linguist with a degree from Sorbonne University. In a mountain village, he worked on his manuscript about the country's social problems. His study was published posthumously (Lajčiak, 1921). Its well-roundedness and methodological clarity are still esteemed (Turčan, 1996; Pašiak, 1996).

After the founding of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the Sociological Seminar was established in 1925 at Comenius University in Bratislava. Mainly Czechs – Josef Král, Otakar Machotka, Anton Obrdlik, and Josef Tvrdý – influenced its work (Laiferová, 1995) until the division of Czechoslovakia in 1939. Then Anton Štefánek took the chair of the Sociological Seminar. He fostered applied sociology and "sociography", his name for sociology based on statistical description (Pašiak, 1994). His principal work *Foundations of Sociography* (Anton Štefánek, 1945) is a widely cited social analysis of Slovakia (Pašiak, 1980; Turčan, 1992, 1994; Falťan, Gajdoš, Pašiak, 1995). In 1945, the Sociological Department of Matica Slovenská was founded in Martin, and in 1946, the first issue of the journal *Sociologický Sborník* (Sociological Volume) appeared. Alexander Hirner, the most productive sociologist of the 1940s, headed the department.[2]

In the inter-war period, sociological development was intertwined with Christian social thinking, though separately in Catholic and Lutheran circles (Kvasničková, 1998, Turčan, 1998, Laiferová, 1998).

The spectrum of Marxism-Leninism, 1948-1989

The Marxist perspective was marginal in Slovakia before 1948. It was associated with the working class movement, and most Slovak adherents of Marxist sociology were politically active in Prague and used their occasional field observations in political debates. Marxist intellectuals criticized poverty, capitalist production, and private ownership and published in their journal *DAV*.

Since 1948, the Communist Party centrals had to promote the expansion of Marxism (Kopčok, 1998). In the early 1950s, Soviet texts celebrating Marxist classics and mainly Stalin's work were translated on a vast scale, starting the dogmatization of the social sciences. Marxism-Leninism became the monopoly doctrine with a one-sided emphasis on the propagandistic and ideological function of theory. Sociology was labeled a bourgeois pseudo-science (Sirácky, 1950), and sociological workplaces and departments and the journal were cancelled. Sociologists either had to change their discipline (most chose philosophy) or were deprived of any possibility to do research work[3].

After 1956, first attempts were made to revive sociology; and in 1960, the Department of Social Research was established by the Institute for Philosophy of the Slovak Academy of

[1] This text benefited from the comments of Eva Laiferová, our kind discussant. Unfortunately, the lack of space did not permit us to implement all her suggestions.

Sciences (SAS). In 1964, the Department of Sociology at Comenius University was re-established and the Institute of Sociology of SAS was founded. In this period, the scholastic application of Marxism-Leninism was criticized and attempts were made to revive Marx's original ideas.[4] The first task of the renewed sociology was to define its research subject and its relation to historical materialism. Though similar discussions always recurred in periods when Marxist-Leninism was in a weakened position, in this period there were more reform advocates than actual reformers (Filová, Elena, 1998).

Beginning in the mid-1960s, Polish sociology exerted considerable influence on Slovak sociology by providing Slovak scholars with numerous fellowships to Polish sociological departments, through the translations of Polish sociologists like Jerzy Wiatr, Zygmunt Bauman, Jan Szczepański, Maria Hirszowicz, etc., through participation in joint research projects, and because it was possible to study sociology at Polish universities. This impact lasted till the beginning of "normalization" in 1970 (Pašiak, 1997).

Slovak sociology's most intensive international cooperation and presentation came in the late 1960s, when Slovaks participated in the ISA Congresses in Evian in 1967 and in Varna in 1970. In the 1970s and 1980s, cooperation narrowed down to the socialist block. International mobility at universities was negligible.

The Warsaw Pact occupation in 1968 and the Communist Party screenings in 1970 hindered the country's democratization. Few sociologists were forbidden to teach or to do research.[5] But favorably referring to non-Marxist sociology sufficed for one to receive the livelihood-threatening label of "revisionist". This threat led to caution and cowardice. Though sociology could develop institutionally, its cognitive and critical functions were ideologically hampered.[6] The Five-Year State Plan of Basic Research coordinated research. Its priorities in social sciences were attuned to the goals of the Party programs, for instance "diminishing differences between the working class and the intelligentsia", "the process of equalizing town and village", and "socialist personality development". Social class, defined by people's relations to the means of production, was still the canonized concept of the basic unit of social life. In empirical research, however, quiet debates[7] ensued about its analytical suitability for socialist society. Methodology (Hirner, 1976, Schenk, 1988) and later family research (Provazník et al., 1989) were less ideologically restricted sociological domains.

In the second half of the 1980s, partly in response to the Party's demand to combat "people's false consciousness and relicts of bourgeois prejudices", public opinion surveys became more frequent, under the auspices and the strict informational control of the Communist Party Central Committee. Individual experience and consciousness was rehabilitated as a source of knowledge. Information about participatory research (Frič et al, 1988), critical studies in the sociology of science (Gál, Frič, and Bútorová, 1987), and the topic of self-help groups and social movements (Martin Bútora) contributed to socially-engaged sociology. Bútora's research on addiction (Bútora, 1989) offered a comprehensive overview of theoretical approaches to the study of marginal behavior and self-help groups. It also served as a source of practicable examples of sociological work with and in communities.

The impact of Western sociological theories on Slovak sociology before 1989

During the liberalized 1960s, numerous Western authors like Charles Wright Mills, Herbert Marcuse, Talcott Parsons, Erich Fromm, etc. appeared in (mostly) Czech translation. In the 1970s, they were supplemented by translations of Russian overviews of Western sociology (Galina Michailovna Andrejeva, Gennadij Vasilievič Osipov, Michail Nikolajevič Rutkevič, etc.). The study of sociological classics and contemporary sociological theories (Alijevová, 1986) was an essential part of sociological education,[8] but until 1989, the impact of Western sociological theories on Slovak sociology was quite negligible. The principle that Marxist authors' theory had to surpass any non-Marxist authors cited was very difficult to fulfill.[9] It was easier simply to avoid referring to them at all. The outcome was a rapid decline of references to Western authors: in the

Slovak journal *Sociológia,* the proportion of references to non-Marxist sociologists was more than 40% in 1969 and 1970, but the long-term average (1971-1988) did not exceed 10% (Dianiška, 1989).

Oppositional activities

The 1970 Party screenings excluded a few Slovak sociologists from academic life as "unreliable". But the majority of sociologists were left in place, their livelihoods dependent on Party-controlled opportunities to work. This limited the formation of alternative structures in Slovakia. Oppositional activities emerged mainly in connection with the Soviet *perestroika* in the second half of the 1980s.

In 1987, the group around Fedor Gál and Pavol Frič began promoting the idea of participatory sociology, identifying problems from *the bottom up*, and dialogue between the state administration and a broader public (Frič et al, 1988; Szomolányi, 1988; Gál et al, 1990). Participation also characterized Roško's research on enterprises in Bratislava at the end of the 1980s. The focus here was on workers' participation in enterprise management and the study of relations of control and collaboration among workers, trade union leaders, and managers. The researchers also involved the people under study in the process of validating the research findings (Roško et al., 1989).

One encouraging event was Szomolanyi's October 11, 1988 lecture on the history of the Institute for Sociology. She was the first person to publicly criticize "normalization" policy in sociology and the ideological restriction of its development. She stated that Slovak sociology had become a sterile and conformist socio-technique without deeper theoretical reflection (Szomolányi, 1990, 1995). In September 1989, at the second congress of Slovak Sociological Association (SSA), sociologists supported democratization and anti-totalitarian ideas (Roško, 1990) and for the first time elected non-Party men to the SSA Committee (Macháček, 1990).

2. Redefinition of the discipline since 1990

The change of paradigms

The Marxist paradigm in Slovak sociology, or more precisely, the constant explicit reference to Marxists and the use of terms like structure and superstructure, class relations, property, capital, and exploitation, ended in 1990 rapidly and spontaneously. From 1990 to 1995, the journal *Sociológia* did not receive any text framed in a Marxist perspective or defending the principles of Marxist ideology (Feglová et al., 1995). Emblematic Marxist words vanished from sociologists' vocabularies. Only one article searched for the failures of the Marxist conceptualization of social life.[10] In the 1990s, authors did not as a rule refer to articles they or their colleagues had published before 1989.[11] How are we to interpret this discontinuity and the ease with which Slovak sociologists abandoned the Marxist perspective and their own work? There are several possible explanations: (a) Ignoring one's own work[12] might signal that its Marxist framing had been merely tactical – to mask critical analysis that could otherwise be interpreted as anti-regime. (b) A researcher might have a lukewarm relation to theory of any kind (Bohumil Búzik in: Laiferová and Turčan, 1997). (c) Political change coincided with a change of generations – key guards of Slovak sociology's ideological purity in the 1970s and 1980s were just retiring at the end of the 1980s.

Since 1989, the turn to empirical research has been striking. Surveys, polls, public opinion studies, and life history collections started immediately. They indicated sociologists' belief in and hunger for authentic, uncensored data. They stressed the need to "use the unique historical opportunity to observe the current changes"; and "to record the vanishing witnesses" of historical events whose interpretation until then had been ideologically skewed (e.g. Kusá, 1992). The introductions to many articles and volumes justified their descriptive character by the duty to preserve the fullest possible description of facts for future research. The realist stance – belief in

the possibility of mirroring social reality – dominated the articles in Sociológia in the first half of the 1990s; they had a minimum of explicit theoretical framing. This descriptive tendency was probably strengthened by (a) the traditional division of labor between Slovak and Czech sociologists in joint research projects, where Slovaks tended to transfer the theoretical work to their Czech counterparts (Búzik, 1997: 27-28) and (b) the new model of research cooperation with Western sociologists. This cooperation was often reduced to the translation of already elaborated questionnaires and the organization of data collection and processing. The scarcity of articles published in co-authorship by Slovak sociologists and their foreign partners supports this assumption: as late as 1995, *Sociológia* had published only one article of this type (Bačová, Homišinová, and Cooper, 1994). Later the situation improved.

Ján Sopóci first raised the question of the paradigm. He suggested that, aside from the eclectics, the most numerous group worked "without any explicit theoretical perspective and is willing to state openly that they could do well without any theory" (Sopóci, 1993). Later, Búzik advocated the legitimacy of eclectic approaches (Búzik, 1995) and argued that the present Slovak sociology was characterized by numerous theoretical perspectives that were not clearly articulated, not consistently used, and rather pragmatically combined. We can even speak about intuitive programmatic eclectics. Such a characterization fits the traditional quantitative surveys as well as the proliferating qualitative studies.[13]

Changes of elites

If we define the sociological elite by their ability to control access to informational[14] and financial sources, then it includes sociologists who are at the head of research and educational institutions, as well as the members of various scientific approval and examination commissions, funding awarding commissions, editorial boards, etc. We can include among the sociological "power elite" also those whom journalists consider the core source of information or the reference point and whose references influence their colleagues' access to the media.

In 1989-1990, the scientific "power elite" underwent substantial changes. Staff immediately used the opportunity to choose persons for management positions (who were previously chosen by Party bodies). Positions were changed or subjected to votes of confidence by secret ballot with the entire staff participating. In secret balloting, Róbert Roško was "100% confirmed" as the head of the Sociological Department of the Institute for Philosophy and Sociology. The staff of the Department of Sociology (Comenius University) voted for Juraj Schenk (instead of Marcel Sloboda). Juraj Schenk was confirmed as Department Head in two elections. Schenk is concerned with sociological methodology and complex quantitative data analysis and modeling. He is the author of several methodological monographs. In 1992, he qualified as a university professor and is still the only university professor in sociology[15] in Slovakia. After the re-establishment of the Institute of Sociology,[16] the staff of the Institute elected Ľubomír Falťan its director. Falťan is now in his third term of office, confirmed each time by secret ballot.[17]

In November 1989, Soňa Szomolányi gained a high civil reputation for her involvement in and support of the university students' strike and demonstrations. Sociologists, most strikingly Fedor Gál, who headed the movement "Public against Violence" (VPN), but also Martin Bútora, Zora Bútorová, and others who were active in the protests of Winter 1989 and the subsequent political negotiations gained a similar reputation.

In 1990-1991, the composition of the editorial board of the journal *Sociológia* reflected the changes of the elite and the overlapping of criteria for scientific, civil, and political prestige. The members were also ministers of the Slovak government and the Czechoslovakian president' advisor. In the second half of 1990, the editorial board was composed nearly solely of people from the academic milieu.

Ján Pašiak was put in charge as editor-in-chief of the journal Sociológia in 1990. Ladislav Macháček, a continual member and editor of Sociológia from the journal's foundation on, was put

in charge as editor-in-chief in the mid-1990s. Since 1990, the journal has had foreign advisors from Italy, the United Kingdom, the USA, Austria, and Japan.

Scientometric criteria are the second way of defining the scientific elite. The first half of the 1990s was characterized by the underestimation of degrees and other standards of an academic career. Besides the economically determined declining interest in studying for a PhD, the academic middle generation was too involved in flourishing survey research to aspire to scientific degrees. After the provisional years of exemption, the Supreme Accreditation Commission stipulated that any institution offering a PhD had to have a supervising guarantor who had earned a Dr.Sc.[18] or Professor degree. The Institute of Sociology (SAS) did not fulfill this precondition and ceased to be a place of PhD studies in 1999.

In the first half of the 1990s, even academic sociologists considered it more meaningful to mobilize the public with their newspaper articles or research reports for the expert audience (DG XII European Commission) than to write for the small audience of the scientific journals. Despite this practice, there were a considerable number of foreign references. There are many references to the analyses of political situation during and after the division of Czechoslovakia and to electoral behavior (Soňa Szomolányi, Zora and Martin Bútora, Vladimír Krivý). Because of this practice, even the cited authors had a strikingly small number of articles published in the scientific journals covered in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), even in the Slovak and Czech ones. Slovakia's domestic Sociológia' is covered in the SSCI, so the proportion of Slovak SSCI articles has grown, but there are still few articles by Slovak authors published in foreign (except for Czech!) sociological journals. Even those who often publish in foreign journals had only one or two articles published in foreign SSCI journals, and none of these were in the truly sociological journals (e.g. Bútora Martin and Zora, 1993, 1999; Wightman and Szomolányi, 1995; Falťan and Dodder, 1995; Piscová and Dodder, 1995; Radičová, 1994).

New institutional structures

In the 1990s, savings measures and the state's weakening economic functions led to a decline in outlays for science and education from 0.48% in 1993 to 0.38% in 1998 (Slovensko, 2000: 640). The result was a loss of jobs in science and research organizations. Several branch research institutions were gradually cancelled or significantly reduced, including the Research Institute of Culture at the Ministry of Culture, the Research Institute for Economics and Organization of the Building Industry, the Journalist Research Institute, and the Institute for Education and Information in the Ministry of Education. The savings measures led to the cancellation of the majority of full-time jobs of sociologists working in industrial enterprises (often together with the shutting of the enterprises themselves). The sub-disciplines of the sociology of labor, work, and organizations nearly ceased to exist in Slovakia. The SSA Section of the sociology of work was cancelled. Academic research institutions still existed in the 1990s, but in a leaner shape. For instance, the number of staff members at the Institute for Sociology has fallen from 39 in 1990 to 25 in 2000 (Laiferová and Búzik, 2001).

In spite of financial problems, the number of universities, students, and teaching positions increased. In 1991, the Social Work Department was established at the Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University with sociologists in the staff; and in 1992, the Department of Sociology was established at a new Trnava University. Jozef Matulník heads the department. Since 1997, the annual number of graduates in sociology has doubled; there are now more than 30-35 graduates.[19] Former sociologists also work and head the Department of Political Science at Comenius University (Soňa Szomolányi, Iveta Radičová). New universities (there are now 13 universities) offered new positions at their departments of social science, which provide sociological education for non-sociologists. But research there is negligible. In spite of increasing economic hardships, universities and academic institutions have preserved their autonomy in the thematic orientation of research and the organization of work and personnel; but they cannot grow.

The Ministry of Defense created job opportunities at the newly established (and twice cancelled and re-established) Office for Sociological Research in Military Service, with Karol Čukan at its head. The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family continues to operate the established Research Institute of Labor and Social Affairs. The Institute provides research and social policy analysis commissioned by the Ministry. In 1994, the Ministry established the Bratislava International Center for Family Studies, which employs eight full-time and part-time researchers with academic backgrounds.

Non-academic working opportunities for sociologists are in marketing research, consultation services, social services, volunteer work, and large firms' personnel departments. Many non-governmental organizations employ sociology graduates and conduct surveys and social analyses. The latter's skill in and sources for disseminating their research findings often help them overshadow academic research. The leaders are the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) , founded by Zora Bútorová and Martin Bútora, and the Center for the Analysis of Social Policy S.P.A.C.E, founded by Iveta Radičová and Helena Woleková. The most important output of the IVO is its annual "Global Reports" – comprehensive volumes of analysis of the country's economic, cultural, and social issues (1996–2001). They are co-authored by sociologists (Vladimír Krivý, Soňa Szomolányi, Roman Džambazovič, Iveta Radičová.) and published concurrently in Slovak and English.

Public opinion research developed rapidly in the 1990s. Besides the state-funded Institute for Public Opinion Research of the Slovak Statistical Office (subordinated to the Central Committee of the Communist Party until 1989), numerous commercial and non-governmental agencies started marketing and public opinion research. Historians of sociology will definitely focus on the intriguing case of the Institute for Social Analysis (CSA) established by Comenius University in 1991; it was staffed by leading scholars who formed the public opinion research group during their work for the Coordination Center of VPN. The Center later transformed itself into a privately operated research agency, FOCUS.

Commercial agencies are organized in the Slovak Association of Research Agencies. Stiff competition triggered debate on how to evaluate sampling quality in public opinion research. Proposals to establish a Sociological Chamber, supported by the General Assembly of the SSA in 2000, have not yet found general agreement on the issues of licensing and supervising public opinion research competence and of methods of preventing the misuse of institutionalized tools.

In addition to the education and research institutions and the journal *Sociológia* (see part 5), Slovak sociology also has a stable institutional pillar in the Slovak Sociological Association. The SSA became the legal body of Slovak sociologists in 1969. From 1969-1992, the SSA's international contacts were administered through the Czechoslovak Sociological Association.[20] In 1993, the SSA became a regular collective member of the International Sociological Association. The SSA elects its Committee for terms of two years. Since 1990, the SSA presidents have been Juraj Schenk (1990-1992; 1993-1994), Gejza Blaas, Ján Bunčák, Eva Laiferová, Ladislav Macháček, Dilbar Alijevová, and Ján Sopóci (2002-2004).

Rehabilitation, repatriation, new departures

Though sociologists like Ján Pašiak, Ľubomír Falťan, Dušan Urda, Martin Bútora, and Zdeněk Šťastný did not receive official certificates of rehabilitation, the end of the communist regime removed long-term obstacles to their academic work. Their rehabilitation was done by the staff's spontaneous election or support for their appointment to the top positions in institutional management. For instance, Falťan was elected Director of the Institute for Sociology. Pašiak was made Editor-in-Chief of *Sociológia*. Bútora became Czechoslovak President Havel's advisor for national minorities issues in 1990-92.

Bútora and Bútorová[21] successfully founded three research agencies (the Center for Social Analysis, FOCUS, and the Institute for Public Affairs). They are the most prolific authors. Besides their great number of titles, they also published several texts in both Slovak and English

(Bútorová et al., 1995, 1996a, 1996b). Zora Bútorová is the most cited Slovak author in SSCI journals (55 references in the fields of political science and gender studies). The increasing number of their articles comes close to the field of political science or practical political engagement (see the selected bibliography of English-language publications).

3. Core theoretical and methodological orientations

Revival and adaptation of major pre-war traditions

In the 1990s, several authors studied the history of pre-war sociology in Slovakia (Turčan, 1992, 1994; Laiferová, 1998; Kvasničková, 1998). However, the history of Slovak sociology has become more a specialization than a general source for present research. Some authors speak about the discontinuity with the pre-war tradition (Turčan, 1997). Some argue that our sociology has continued its inter-war tradition in at least three ways: First, academic sociologists show a high degree of practical engagement. Second, they deliberately identify sociology with collecting data usable for the "organization of public life". And finally, they mistrust theoretical sociology and doubt the necessity to develop it (Kusá, 1997).

New East-West asymmetries

Sopóci was the first to suggest that the declining interest in theoretical issues could be the result of involvement in international survey projects, which pay scholars well for doing auxiliary technical tasks (Sopóci, 1993). Especially in the first years of Slovakia' independence, journalists and politicians were especially sensitive to the asymmetrical relations between domestic and foreign researchers. They thought the translation of questionnaires and the use of pre-existing scales were connected to information campaigns misrepresenting the situation in the country. Some critics assumed that the finding that the Slovak population has less democratic and more authoritarian attitudes than their neighbors had been "ordered" by the foreign research contractors. Some encouraged the Ministry of Education and Science to "think seriously about whom it allows to work at the University and in the Academy". Offended sociologists took such opinions and remarks as additional evidence of authoritarian attitudes that could threaten academic autonomy. Even though administrative interventions did not follow, their widely published opinions had impact.

Quantitative vs. qualitative approaches

As elsewhere, quantitative approaches are pervasive and used in most research. It would take too much space to refer to even a small part of them, so we deal only with (the less extensive) qualitative research.

Qualitative sociology had little problem entering Slovakia. The Slovak Grant Agency for Science VEGA and the journal *Sociológia* accepted and supported its first projects (Kusá, 1992). Qualitative research mainly takes the form of collecting life history narratives and family histories, conducting non-standardized interviews, and analyzing media discourse. In academic sociology, it is linked to Zuzana Kusá (e. g. Kusá, 1992, 1997b), (Harmadyová and Bunčák, 1998) and Findor Andrej (2000). It is attracted to the subjects of the elite and poverty. Outside academia, a diverse research prospers under the label of oral history. Oral history projects collect and preserve the memories of selected social groups and periods. The Milan Šimečka Foundation fulfilled an important fundraising and organizing role in this field. The first large project "History and the Present of Czech and Slovak relations" responded to the division of Czechoslovakia. It resulted in the five-volume collection of life-history narratives of inhabitants of both the countries (Radičová and Fialová, 1994).

The next oral history projects of the Šimečka Foundation collected the memories of the Jewish and Romany survivors of the Holocaust and of the victims of communist persecutions. The next oral history projects organized by BICFS and SPACE focused on female politicians' experiences and resulted in the big collection of the narratives of women active in local and national level politics (Jarmila Filadelfiová, Iveta Radičová, Puliš Peter). Iveta Radičová analyzed the media discourse of the construction of Slovakia's image in foreign dailies (Radičová et al., 1997). Kusá uses discourse analysis and narrative analysis in the study of family and collective memory and the construction of social identities; she also deals with methodological problems of qualitative research (for instance Kusá, 1999).

New approaches (if any)

At the turn of 1980 and 1990, there was intensive interest in participatory research. But this interest waned. Focus groups are one of the newly used data-collecting techniques, not only in marketing research, but also in noncommercial research, for instance in research on the institutional changes in the education system (Zora Bútorová, Oľga Gyárfášová) and in social psychology in the analysis of argumentation and the study of social representations (mainly Plichtová, 2001).

4. Thematic orientation and funding

Transition as a major or exclusive object of study

Modernization, civil society and citizenship, transformation and transition, and political (voting) behavior dominated Slovak sociology in the 1990s. The topics of modernization and civil society emerged in critical debates on reforming socialist society at the end of the 1980s. At the beginning of the 1990s, they became nearly synonymous with the three goals of the transformation process: "a democratic society, the rule of law, and a market economy". These three transformation goals were often were used in article introductions as space-time coordinates. The need for the transformation was taken as self-evident, and only a few articles in *Sociológia* touched on the issue of its social costs (Feglová et al., 1995).[22] Key barriers to transformation were seen mainly in the "traditional value orientation and culture of the people" (Krivý, 1993, 1996, 1997; Szomolányi, 1993; Stena, 1993; and others) and in historically delayed and then – under socialism – forced industrialization and urbanization (Gajdoš, 1992, 1993; Falťan Ľubomír, Gajdoš, and Pašiak, 1995). The idea of an insufficiently developed democratic culture as the most serious barrier to transformation was the framework for numerous articles. Some said, "spiritual culture represents the direct basis of the creation of the new social order" (Stena, 1993: 178). Others considered "historically formed socio-cultural characteristics, including the weaker political and civic culture of the Slovak population" to represent "the deeper level of explanation of the critical attitudes of the Slovak population to the current transformation" (Krivý, 1993: 311). Róbert Roško formulated the concept of the three levels (economic, political, and personal) of the transformation. He argued for the necessity of personal self-transformation, whose most important aspect is shedding egalitarianism and evaluating the coercive methods of government and which is the limiting factor for the next two levels of transformation (Roško, 1995).

Lack of discussion and the fact that articles deal mainly with hindrances to transformation and not with its stakeholders (domestic and international interest groups) promoted the naturalization of the transformation into "historical necessity" or a process of "natural history" (in effect, a continuation of Marxist historicism).

The choice of themes

Aside from transformation, transition, and modernization,[23] the most frequent key phrases in 1990s sociological articles were "sociology of politics", "sociology of minorities and ethnic relations", "sociology of urban, rural, and regional life", and last but not least, "the history of Slovak sociology". The topic of nationalism was first introduced in defending the common state of Czechs and Slovaks. It served to expertly unmask independence efforts as a token of an outlived and perilous nationalism (e.g. Szomolányi, 1992). The topic of ethnicity and minorities found an echo, raising minority issues in domestic and international public forums and stimulating foreign funding agencies' interest to support this kind of research.[24] The results of the foreign-funded projects are published in volumes and journals that are not covered in ISI and are often not known and discussed by the domestic sociological public. Guest editing of thematically-tied issues of *Sociológia* has been welcome but rare (noteworthy exceptions are the issues edited by Iveta Radičová (Radičová, 1995, 2001).

Several domestic and comparative projects studied the issues of local democracy, municipal life, and self-government (Ľubomír Falťan, Silvia Miháliková, Ishikawa Akihiro, and others). Academic priority is also given to social stratification and mobility (Ján Bunčák), criminality (Ján Buček, Lubelcová Gabriela), and family and gender issues (Peter Guráň, Ivan Chorvát, Jarmila Filadelfiová, Magdaléna Piscová, Zora Bútorová).[25]

Though economic transformation and the rule of law became almost ritual parts of article introductions, economic and legal issues were almost neglected. The exception has been social partnership and tripartite negotiations (Čambáliková, 1995, 1996, 1999). Some research topics drew new scholars and re-emerged due to the offer to participate in international projects. A typical case is the study of religion. After the dissolution of the Institute for Scientific Atheism in 1990, sociologists did not study religious life until the ISSP offer to become a member and to implement the ISSP module "Religion" in 1998.

Private vs. public funding

Since 1991, the Slovak Grant Agency for Science VEGA has been the most important part of the scientific infrastructure and an example of scientific self-governance. The scientific community autonomously operates VEGA; projects proposals are evaluated solely by eminent scholars who, like the discipline-specific evaluation committees, are elected from below – by scholars from research institutes. VEGA does not define research priorities, but keeps open the possibility of internal autonomous development of scientific disciplines. However, the amount of funding that VEGA can distribute depends completely on the state budget. The state contribution to VEGA gradually decreased during the 1990s. Since 2001, the government has run a new research and technology development agency. It is better funded than VEGA, has established research (developmental) priorities, and its project evaluation committees are composed of representatives from both the state administration and science. Its concern with the country's developmental agenda in setting research priorities follows the pattern of the Fifth Framework program of the European Commission. Because the government of Slovakia contributes more to the EC research programs than Slovak scientists gained through their participation in the Fifth Framework Programme, they are resolutely advised to join the projects of the programs of the European Commission. A project's coordination with foreign funding– like the publication list and citation lists – is ascertained in the VEGA application form and regarded as the criterion of researcher competence.

5. Public space and academic debates

Debated topics and issues

The irony of the 1990s was that the topic sociologists debated most was the absence of critical debate. This "absence of debate" debate was initiated by Ján Sopóci (Sopóci Ján, 1993, 1995) and later continued and specified as discussing the problem of prevailing empiricism (Sopóci, 1995; Búzik, 1995; Köverová, 1995; Turčan, 1997). In the beginning, "alienation" resulting from "political disharmony" was identified as the main reason for the lack of discussion (Roško, 1993). "Disharmony" in the form of "overlooking and not referring to the work of others" was the outcome of the controversy about the political engagement of the public opinion analysis done by well-known sociologists and then about the scientific name of their research institution. The problem of overlapping political and sociological interpretation was discussed (on a general level) several times, most recently on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the sociological congress in Martin (Roško, 2000; Schenk, 2000; Búzik, 2000).

The editors of *Sociológia* organized several round tables debates on selected topics (democracy, nationalism, history of the Institute for Sociology, the nonprofit sector, etc.). There were also unanswered efforts by various authors to provoke discussion, for example, the methodological article of the Czech author Konopásek (1996). The first spontaneous discussion revolved around the concept of a culturally defined residual group (Stena, 1994). The next discussion was about how to interpret the decreasing birth rate in Slovakia and Europe (Matulník and Pastor, 1997; Guráň and Filadelfiová, 1997). Their "exchange" might be characterized as the clash of functionalistic and pragmatist concepts of social life. The clash between the conservative and the liberal concept of social well-being and of the welfare state took place in the polemics on the state conception of family politics in Slovakia (Lentzová, 2001; Kvapilová, 2001). In *Sociológia*, the sharpest debate was about sociobiology's relations with and contribution to other social sciences. It was opened by the biologist and philosopher Sýkora (1999) and continued by two discussants, the philosopher Tatiana Sedová (2000) and the anthropologist Martin Kánovský.

Principal academic journals

Sociológia, often cited in this paper, is the first and leading Slovak sociological journal. It was founded in 1968. Its publisher is the Institute of Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. It appears six times per year and publishes anonymously peer-reviewed articles, book reviews, round table debates, and interviews with scholars and information from scientific life. In 1994, the journal succeeded in getting coverage in ISI (SSCI databases). The ISI coverage enormously helps Slovak sociologists (as well as other social scientists who are invited to publish in *Sociológia*) in fulfilling the standard scientometric criteria. In 1995, the first issue of *Slovak Sociological Review* appeared in the English language. It was intended to be an independent journal with the same editorial staff as *Sociológia*. For practical reasons (the problem of getting coverage in SSCI, and failures to acquire foreign subscribers), after two years of sending the issues free of charge, the publisher merged the journals. The *Slovak Sociological Review* now appears as the third and the sixth issue of *Sociológia* each year. The majority of the English issues of the *Slovak Sociological Review – Sociológia* do not leave the territory of Slovakia.

From 1991 to 2001, the Institute of Sociology and the SSA published the bulletin *Sociologický zápisník* (Sociological Diary).[26] It appeared four times per year in newspaper format and contained information about sociological events, book reviews, profiles of Slovak sociologists, research projects (including those of students), and occasionally debates.

The Research Institute of Labor and Social Affairs of the Ministry of Labor has published the journal *Social Work and Social Politics* since 1992. It appears ten times per year and publishes basic conceptual materials related to the work of the Ministry, statistical overviews, theoretical articles dealing with social politics, welfare, social insurance, pension reform, and tripartite and

labor relations. Contributors are mainly scholars from the Research Institute, but also other authors, both economists and sociologists. Sociologists also publish in cultural and social-critical weeklies and monthlies like *Literárny týždenník* (Literary Weekly), *OS*, *Domino-fórum*, *Kultúrny život* (Cultural life), and others. Some have apparent political engagement.

Selection of publications in world languages

In the 1990s, Martin Bútora and Zora Bútorová and their coworkers were the most productive Slovak sociologists. Their research was internationally funded, so they often published the results (on the sociology of political life, public opinion research, but also gender issues and the brain drain) concurrently in English. Ladislav Macháček, thanks to his participation in various foreign research projects, and Iveta Radičová, who conducted extensive research on social policy transformation and ethnic groups, followed a similar publication policy. The opposite strategy is that of Ján Sopóci, who deals solely with general sociological themes. He is a co-author of the first secondary school textbook (*Sociológia*, 1995, 1997), the Dictionary of Social Sciences (1997), and monographs on collective behavior (1996), the relation between politics and social life (1998), and social stratification and social mobility (1999).

New manuals, databases

Slovak sociologists have collaborated in numerous international comparative projects. They still have no central archive,[27] but the majority of the projects' databases are accessible in well-known European data archives and universities. For instance, the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), in whose context the module surveys National Identity (Magdaléna Piscová, 1997), Religion (Ján Bunčák, 2001), and Social Inequalities (Katarína Strapcová, 2001) were realized, is archived at Cologne University; the European Values Study Surveys (1991, 1999) are archived at Tilburg University, etc.

6. Views on further development

International cooperation

Because the forms of research funding are diverse and there is no institution of "central" registration of foreign publication outputs that are not covered in SSCI, the number of completed international projects or projects implemented with foreign funding is hard to estimate. Along with registered international projects and conferences, co-authored publications are the most tangible evidence of international cooperation. In the first half of the 1990s such texts were very rare, but their number has been growing since 1995. Several co-authored monographs have appeared (for instance, Szomolányi and Gould, 1997; Delmartino, Versmessen, Miháliková, and Falťan, 1997). Going by the actual length of cooperation in the projects at universities and the Academy, the most important foreign research partners will continue to be the Czech Republic, Poland, Austria, France, and Japan. The Japan Institute of Social Sciences at Chuo University Tokyo cooperates mainly with the Institute for Sociology in research on local communities and, more recently, on industrial relations. The Department of Sociology at Comenius University cooperates with the Rene Descartes University in Paris, the Nicolas Copernicus University in Toruń, and Austrian university research centers. The Department of Sociology at Trnava University collaborates with the University of Cardinal Wyszyński in Warsaw. The Polish partner provided several teaching courses when Trnava University was in its early stages and now serves as a center for PhD studies for Slovak graduates. Sociology departments are involved in international cooperation through the UNESCO, TEMPUS, and PHARE programs. Participation in the multi-national research projects supported by the Fifth Framework Program of the EC has been very rare (Ladislav Macháček), but are considered to be of crucial importance.

The National Committee MOST UNESCO, part of the Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, has supported various projects, including the 2nd European Social Science Conference: "Europe: Expectations and Reality – The Challenge for the Social Sciences." This conference was organized by the Institute for Sociology and held in Bratislava in 1998 (Falťan, 1999).

The impact of EU accession

Slovakia's effort to accede to the EU has also marked the thematic orientation of sociological research (the study of pro-EU attitudes, citizens' democratic potential, the development of European identity) and its comparative character (extensive comparisons of the differences in the EU readiness of Slovaks, Czechs, and citizens of the other accession countries).[28] Some argue that the accession effort has not only contributed to new themes and to an increase in comparative studies, but – in various ways – to paralyzing sociological discussion (see Kusá, 1999, 2001).

The impact of research in the public sphere

Besides the influential public activity of several sociologists in the revolutionary events of 1989, sociologists were most visible for their political engagement[29] at the beginning of the 1990s and because of some politicians' negative reactions to these sociologists' analyses of political life. Political critique of the interpretation of public opinion research data was more frequent in the first half of the 1990s. As in other countries, the media mostly equate sociology with public opinion research and give the greatest space to electoral preferences and scales of political trust. Various sorts of expert analysis for the government or for foreign institutions like the World Bank (Radičová and Woleková, 1999, Radičová, 2001a, 2001b) exert important, though less apparent influence.

The problem of the "brain drain"

There are two forms of brain drain in Slovakia: the internal brain drain from the academic to the commercial sphere and the brain drain from Slovak to foreign research institutions. In both forms, "pull factors"[30] (mainly, much better pay) prevail. The first form of the brain drain is very frequent. Academia can offer considerable autonomy and freedom of research, but only very low stipends for PhD students and salaries for graduates, whose actual value is further decreased by the high apartment rents in the capital, Bratislava (the only place for PhD study in sociology). So talented graduates look for jobs outside the science, mainly in marketing research, personnel departments, or the nonprofit sector. Those who leave the capital face the risk of unemployment.

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1 The most sociologically informed members of HLAS' group were Anton Štefánek, later the first Slovak professor of sociology, and Vavro Šrobár and Milan Hodža, who later became prominent politicians.

2 Although the communists persecuted and imprisoned him in the 1950s, he continued his research (Hirner, 1973, 1976) and teaching at the renewed Department of Sociology in Bratislava. During the twenty years of his pedagogical work, he educated many sociologists who are proud to have been his students (Turčan, 2000).

3 In spite of their overt deprecation of empirical research, Party administrations ordered several surveys (Katriak, 1988, Szomolányi, 1990).

4 The young Marx's texts, unknown until then, were studied.

5 Martin Bútora, Zdeněk Šťastný, and Ján Pašiak.

6 The personnel structure of research workers was controlled by the District Communist Party Committee and, at the beginning of the 1970s, also by the Central Communist Party Committee; every new scholar and even every PhD student had to be approved by the Party.

7 The sole discussant was Robert Roško, who introduced the concept of the anti-bourgeois class collective to suggest the concept's limited suitability for grasping the actual problems of socialist daily life (more about Roško's theoretical efforts in Búzik, 1999; Roško, 2000).

[8] University teachers continued to refer to Western sociological theories. Dilbar Alijevová dealt with contemporary American sociological theories (Alijevová, 1979, 1986, 1989), Ján Pichňa developed an institutionalist perspective in his sociology of labor, occupation, and organization (Pichňa, 1982), and Alexander Hirner and Juraj Schenk elaborated methodological issues and system analysis (Hirner, 1973, 1976; Schenk, 1989).

[9] In this period, articles devoted to non-Marxist sociology were categorized as "the critique of bourgeois theories". Some of them were undoubtedly real ideological critique, but others tried to present Western sociological theories without bias. The representation practices applied in such "criticism" deserve special analysis.

[10] Jiří Suchý discussed the shortcomings of the construction of social development in socialist prognosis and planning (1991).

[11] Only a few authors referred to their own texts published under socialism, for instance, Róbert Roško, Dilbar Alijevová (modern sociological theories), Ján Pašiak (local communities), and Ladislav Macháček (the sociology of youth).

[12] However, this "quotation gap" suggests that the older articles were not worth building on and that the Marxist paradigm and Slovak sociology of the "normalization" period did not deserve attention (Kusá, 1996a). Few authors continued their research. Dilbar Alijevová has continued her research in phenomenological sociology. She deals mainly with the topic of personal and group identity (Alijevová, 2000), framed mainly by a phenomenological and existentialist perspective. The only author who returned to his older work, reviewed it critically, and tried to reconnect it with his present interest in civil society was Robert Roško (2000a, 2000b).

[13] Here we do not deal with qualitative studies separately, because – in agreement with various authors (Becker, Howard, 1998, Seale, Clive, 1999, etc.) – we do not think they can be considered a single paradigm, nor to be a clear alternative to (similarly wrongly lumped) quantitative research.

[14] In the first half of the 1990s, the situation was quite different. The Internet was not accessible at universities or the Academy and many strategically important addresses, terms, etc., especially those connected to fund-raising, were accessible only to a few people included in the directories of donor institutions and were not disseminated freely throughout the sociology community.

[15] Soňa Szomolányi has recently qualified as a university professor in political science. She heads the Political Science Department at Comenius University. Martin Bútora and Fedor Gál also qualified as university professors in political science at Prague Charles University. Fedor Gál left for the Czech Republic in 1993.

[16] After Róbert Roško's refusal to run for the position of its Director.

[17] Ľubomír Falťan acquired his PhD in sociology in Poland. His critical attitude toward the "normalizing" practices of Andrej Sirácky kept him from being approved to work in the Academy of Science until 1988.

[18] The Dr.Sc. – the so-called Big Doctorate – is the highest academic degree for scientific activity. The applicant has to fulfill scientometric criteria like a certain number of published books, articles in ISI periodicals, references in the quotations index, and tutored PhD students.

[19] Both sociology departments are younger than the institutions of the Academy.

[20] Czech sociologists did not have a sociological association; they organized directly in the Czechoslovak Sociological Association, whose headquarters were in Prague. From the perspective of information dissemination, the Slovak/Czech partnership had an asymmetric character.

[21] Martin Bútora and Zora Bútorová are the Slovak Ambassadors to the U.S. (1999-) and honorary presidents of IVO.

[22] The situation changed in the middle of the 1990s. The increased interest in social problems might be ascribed to the operation of the SPACE agency and especially the SOCO (Social Costs of Economic Transformation) program of the Institute of Human Science in Vienna, which supported most of the research and publication (Radičová, 1995; Falťan Ľubomír, Gajdoš, and Pašiak, 1996).

[23] Because the pool of authors was small, a single author could represent a whole sociological sub-discipline (as Ladislav Macháček did for the sociology of youth and Juraj Schenk did for system theory and modelling). A few efficient authors could make a topic dominate Slovak sociology. For instance, in 1990-1995, eleven scholars wrote half of the articles published in Sociológia (Feglová et al., 1995).

[24] In the 1990s, VEGA evaluated and supported only one project on nationalism and none concerning the Romany minority (Robert Klobucký and Katarína Strapcová in 2002) Research on Romany issues was usually initiated by foreign research foundations, including the World Bank (Radičová, 2000, 2001).

[25] More in (Búzik and Laiferová, 2001).

[26] The editor of Sociological Diary was Zuzana Kusá.

[27] In 2002, Katarína Strapcová started her project of building a Slovak Archive for Survey Data at the Institute for Sociology (SAS). Her goal is to create a primary data catalogue and then to attempt a systematic documentation of the existing stock of social science data sets (Strapcová, 2001).
[28] For example, Rošk et al., 1997; Machonin , 1994; Bunčák et al., 1999.
[29] Some distinguished sociologists (Soňa Szomolányi, Olga Gyárfásová, Zora Bútorová) used their political experiences and gradually re-qualified as political scientists.
[30] However, the stagnated number of workplaces in academic institutions and the fact that competitions are announced only when someone retires can be interpreted as "push factors".

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